DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 290 698 SO 018 883

TITLE	Government by the People, Government upon the People. A Comparison of Democratic and Undemocratic Forms of Government: The U.S. and the U.S.S.R.
INSTITUTION	B'nai B'rith, New York, N.Y. Anti-Defamation League.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-88464-120-1
PUB DATE	87
NOTE	29p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ADL Education Department, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 ($10.00).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Capitalism; *Civil Liberties; *Civil Rights; Communism; Democracy; Due Process; Justice; Learning Activities; Learning Modules; Political Science; Politics; Privacy; Search and Seizure; *Social Studies; United States Government (Course)
IDENTIFIERS	United States; USSR

ABSTRACT

The goals of this learning packet are to: (1) increase understanding of the Soviet system; (2) enhance appreciation of U.S. constitutionally guaranteed rights; and (3) inform students of how governmental policies of both nations are reflected in the lives of ordinary people. The 17 reproducible lessons are designed to present: (1) the philosophy and structure of government; (2) the rights of citizens; and (3) with the work and home life of ordinary Soviet and U.S. people. In lessons 1-3, students define and distinguish between the political and economic systems of the United States and the Soviet Union. In lessons 4-9, students compare the rights to free speech, free press, fair trial, suitable punishment for crimes, free worship, and free movement in the United States and the Soviet Union. Students also analyze how government policies are reflected in the lives of contemporary Soviet dissidents and refuseniks, and they will study the U.S. judicial and political systems. In lessons 10-16, students draw comparisons between education, work, crime, and home life in the Soviet Union and the United States. In lesson 17, students analyze reasons that the U.S. government is democratic and the Soviet government is totalitarian. A teacher's guide, which outlines the objectives and teaching strategies for the module, is included with the packet. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED290698

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE,

A Comparison of Democratic and Undemocratic Forms of Government: the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

SO018883

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
E. Blumenberg
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Introduction

The United States and the Soviet Union are superpowers, both claiming to offer their people democracy, economic well-being, and justice under the law. Both, moreover, believe their systems are based on enduring human values. Yet their political and economic structures are starkly different.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith is pleased to present *Government By the People, Government Upon the People* in the interest of promoting a greater understanding of the Soviet system; increasing American appreciation of constitutionally guaranteed rights and privileges; and clarifying student perceptions about government and economics.

This educational program will introduce your secondary school students to the philosophies and operation of the two societies. Your students will also learn how government policies are reflected in the lives of ordinary people. The materials will move from the theoretical toward the personal.

In teaching this subject, it is possible to convey why democracy is preferable to totalitarianism both morally and practically. Students should emerge with a fuller understanding of the difference between day-to-day life in the U.S. and in the U.S.S.R., and a greater appreciation for both the American political system and our quality of life.

As you present lessons and guide class discussion, remember that it is easy to judge Soviet society harshly. Such judgments are frequently in order, especially with regard to cherished human and political rights. Yet some Communist achievements since 1918 have been impressive. Ordinary workers in the Soviet Union are much more comfortable than were their grandparents and great grandparents under the Tsars. Yet, when compared to the Western standard of living today, the Soviets remain far behind.

Rights are defined quite differently in the Soviet Union than in the United States. American law protects the rights of individuals — the right to think differently and act independently. Soviet law claims to protect the welfare of the group. The rights of the individual are submerged in the effort to supposedly better society as a whole. Yet often, the definition of society translates to mean the government bureaucracy and the party elite.

Consider, too, that the Soviet Union is an uneasy amalgam of over one hundred ethnic groups. The Soviet idea of national unity is very different from American pluralism. Soviet leaders fear nationalism or separatism of any of their ethnic groups as leading to potential disharmony or even rebellion. For this reason, the Soviet government fosters cultural unity and teaches conformity in language, attitude, and values.

Finally, it should be noted that there is some evidence that the new policy of glasnost (openness) proclaimed in 1986 by Mikhail Gorbachev, who became General Secretary of the Communist Party in March 1985, may have salutary effects. Although outspoken dissidents are still in prison and refuseniks are still being deprived of their rights, some political prisoners have been released, and there appears to be some greater freedom of artistic and political expression. Once again, however, it is important to clarify to the American student that glasnost is an attempt to improve upon the previous Soviet system. It is not an effort to create American style democracy.

Whether these hopeful events signal any real change in Communist policies remains to be seen. Your students, better informed about Soviet practices, can watch for further developments.

Overview

This program is organized so as to present philosophy and structure of government and economy first, the rights of citizens next, and finally the work and home life of ordinary Soviets and Americans. Students will be more familiar with their own culture than with the Soviet culture. A larger proportion of the limited space available has therefore been given to Soviet life. In some lessons, students are encouraged to draw comparisons or make analyses themselves through research or class discussion.

The program contains lessons designed to be used in sequence, but may be used in other ways. Read the student materials and this teacher's guide through before you begin. Choose from or expand additional activities, discussion topics, and research projects. The program can be tailored to your class needs and the time available.

This package contains all the materials you need to complete the program with your students, although some lessons encourage research. A glossary is provided to define terms and concepts that students may find difficult.

The evaluation form included here gives us an opportunity to benefit from your classroom experience. Please take the time to complete it and return it to us. We will use your responses and recommendations in planning future programs.

Objectives

Lessons 1-3

- Students will define and distinguish between the political and economic systems of the United States and the Soviet Union.

© 1987, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

ISBN 0-88464-120-1

Lessons 4-9

- Students will recognize and compare the extent of, and limitations of, the rights to free speech, free press, fair trial, suitable punishment for crimes, free worship, and free movement in the U.S. and U.S.S.R.
- Students will analyze how government policies are reflected in the lives of contemporary Soviet dissidents and refuseniks.
- Students will examine the workings of their own political and judicial systems.

Lessons 10-16

- Students will draw comparisons between education, work, crime, and home life in the Soviet Union and the United States.

Lesson 17

- Students will analyze what makes the American government democratic; the Soviet government undemocratic.

Preparation

To prepare your students for the lessons contained in this program, help them become familiar with the history and geography of the Soviet Union and the United States. Assign several small groups to use encyclopedias and atlases to report about these topics:

- British colonial rule over the American colonies and the revolution that followed
- Tsarist rule in Russia, accompanying conditions for peasants, and revolution by the Bolsheviks
- American topography and agriculture, including growing season and crop production
- Russian topography and farm production, including growing season and population distribution

Especially encourage students to look at the U.S.S.R. on the globe, recognizing not only its vast size (8,500,000 square miles and 280 million people), but also how much of it lies in cold or arctic areas. Note that population distribution in the Soviet Union is now heavily urban, and tremendous effort has been focused on industrialization.

Methods

Lesson 1: Democracy

After students complete Lesson 1, list and discuss in class student definitions of democracy (perhaps writing them on the chalkboard). Encourage students to analyze how having more than one political party, an adversarial climate, and the right to criticize incumbents strengthens our system. Help them identify what events in their daily lives reflect our democratic system — reading uncensored news, protestors or union strikers marching together, or watching television comedians poke fun at the president or other officials.

Ask students to discuss their answers to Question 2. On the chalkboard, you might want to categorize student examples into the various rights listed in the Bill of Rights.

Lesson 2: Soviet Communism, A Totalitarian Form of Government

After students have completed the activity, ask them to help you list on the chalkboard key elements in the Soviet system that make it undemocratic. For example, the centralization of power in the hands of the Communist Party and the lack of truly contested elections, as well as the lack of freedom of speech, press, worship and assembly.

You may also want to devote some time to a discussion of the American political process. One of the goals of this program is to increase appreciation of the right to vote and encourage students to use that right.

Lesson 3: Economic Systems

After students have worked through the lesson sheet, discuss with them the fact that neither American capitalism nor Soviet communism is a pure system. In the United States, anti-trust laws limit the growth of businesses, and some industries, such as utilities, may be government owned. In the Soviet Union, some very limited free enterprise exists. Three percent of farmland, for example, is worked by individuals for personal profit, and yet that three percent produces as much as one third of some Soviet crops.

Ask students if they know of any antitrust cases in the United States in which a large company was broken into smaller ones to assure competition within an industry. (The breakup of AT&T is one of the most obvious.)

Answers:

1. Capitalist	3. Capitalist
2. Communist	4. Communist

Lesson 4: The Right to Speak Out

Discuss with students the ways in which the Soviet Union has violated the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords. Analyze why the rights enumerated in the Accords are so important.

In the United States, the right to speak out is carefully protected. Our Constitution even protects the rights of Nazis and members of the Ku Klux Klan to march and to express their views openly. Ask your students if they can think of situations in which

unpopular or unattractive views were freely and publicly expressed in our society. Many protest marches are in this category.

As a supplement to Question 4, ask students to bring to class newspaper articles, letters to the editor, editorials, or political cartoons which criticize or satirize government figures or policies.

Lesson 5: The Individual's Right to Correct Information

Discuss with students the quote at the beginning of the student lesson. 'What does the schoolgirl's comment reveal about differing American and Soviet attitudes toward a free press?

Answers:

1. False	3. False
2. True	4. False

Lesson 6A: The Arts

Ask your students what they think the role of the artist in society should be. Should artists express the visions, feelings, or frustrations of individuals, or should they try to strengthen the commitment and morality of the group? Remind students that Soviet citizens have a different concept of rights than we have. The Soviet government believes that the welfare of their system and nation should be protected, even if individuals suffer. They believe no individual should have the right to endanger the group. Following that philosophy, the government not only shapes the content of art, but also passes judgment on what types and forms of art are acceptable.

Ask your students to consider, as well, how the role of the artist in the Soviet Union produces different art and different responses to art than does the role of the artist in the United States. Protest, while commonplace in the United States, is rarely expressed and is considered a dangerous, and consequently heroic, undertaking in the Soviet Union.

Additional Activity: Can students think of examples of American art that criticized the government or our accepted way of life? Suggest examples such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*, or the recent television film *The Day After*.

Lesson 6B: The Arts

After students have completed the activity, ask them if there is any kind of censorship of films and music in the United States. Students may realize that the censorship of films comes from within the film industry itself, through its rating system that determines the appropriateness of a film for a certain age group (G, PG, R, X). Industry self-censorship usually comes about as a result of pressure from public interest groups. Such citizen groups have also influenced the music industry to impose some form of self-censorship upon the lyrics of certain rock music. Clear distinction should, of course, be made between censorship imposed by a government with strict penalties for noncompliance, and self-censorship, where compliance is voluntary.

Answers:

1. U.S.	4. U.S.
2. U.S.S.R.	5. U.S.S.R.
3. U.S.S.R.	

Lessons 7A and 7B: Arrest, Trial, and Punishment

To help your students understand the difference between the American and Soviet systems of justice you might want to use as an example the "Chicago Seven" case in the U.S. Seven political radicals were accused by the federal government of conspiracy to incite a riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. All were acquitted. On the other hand, in the Soviet Union, all defendants that we know of who have been accused of political crimes have been convicted of those crimes in Soviet courts.

This lesson also provides an opportunity for students to learn more about the American system of justice. Invite a trial lawyer, prosecuting attorney, or judge to serve as a guest speaker. Ask your speaker to explain the rights given by U.S. law to a person accused of a crime. The speaker might also indicate how the rights of the accused are protected throughout the process of arrest, investigation, and trial. Encourage your students to ask about usual punishments for a range of crimes, as well as prison conditions for those who are convicted.

Additional Activity: Organize several small groups of students. Assign each group to follow a case presently being tried in the court system. Students may discover their cases from newspaper accounts or from contacting their local prosecuting attorney. After choosing a case to follow, students should not only read newspaper accounts, but also try to interview defending or prosecuting attorneys and attend the trial, if possible. Students should then make reports to the class analyzing how the rights of the defendant were protected and how the judicial system worked to punish or acquit.

Additional Activity: Ask students to consult newspaper indexes or write to a special interest group for the full stories of individual Soviet dissidents or refusniks such as:

Yelena Bonner
Alexander Ginzburg
David Goldfarb
Natasha Khassina
Andrei Sakharov
Anatoly Shcharansky

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For further information, students may write or call one of the organizations listed below.

National Conference on Soviet Jewry
10 East 40th Street
New York, NY 10016
Phone: (212) 679-6122

Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry
210 West 91st Street
New York, NY 10024
Phone: (212) 799-8900

Freedom House
48 E. 21st Street
New York, NY 10010
Phone: (212) 473-9691

These groups may have local affiliates in your area. You may also consult the regional office of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in your area for information and possible speakers.

Guide students to discuss the differing viewpoints regarding religious observance in the Soviet Union and the United States. In the U.S., freedom of religion is carefully protected, and the separation of church and state insures respect for different religious beliefs. In the Soviet Union, Communist Party members are expected to have no religion. Ask students to explain why freedom of religion is so important in a free society.

After students have studied Soviet treatment of people who wish to leave the U.S.S.R., you might want to analyze in greater detail the topic of Americans who may wish to leave their country. How do they go about it?

Soviet education emphasizes fact rather than critical thinking, shaping attitudes and values in line with Communist Party policies. American education also shapes attitudes and values, but does so in line with our democratic system. Encourage students to examine the education they have received. What heroes and patriotic values are suggested in history lessons; what values about careers or relationships are offered in student extracurricular activities; what values about winning, losing, or playing fairly are found in sports activities; and, what values come from interaction with peers. After your students complete the lesson sheet, ask them to give examples from their own experience.

In these segments, students get a glimpse of how Soviet society provides for the material well-being of its people. Soviet citizens have, in principle, certain guaranteed rights that Americans do not have — the right to job security, the right to a home, however modest, and the right to basic consumer goods, such as food and necessities. The government allocates resources to provide what, in its judgment, is enough for everyone, although this may mean that people wait in lines for hours to obtain foodstuffs; that several Soviet families may have to live together in one apartment; and that Soviet dissidents and refuseniks are denied the right to work at their professions and forced to work far below their skills and educational level. Soviet citizens generally seem willing to accept a system that is highly intrusive and heavy-handed in confining individual liberties, on the grounds that it provides them with a measure of economic security.

Capitalist materialism, with its apparent callousness for the poor, is often criticized by communist countries. Yet the American system contains many safety nets. Welfare, Medicaid, and other forms of government assistance ameliorate the heavy individual responsibilities of the free market system. Americans have chosen a system in which each person makes his or her own economic choices. This freedom also entails taking responsibility for one's own economic well-being. The safety nets are for those who, temporarily or otherwise, are unable to successfully manage that responsibility.

Give your students time to read the lesson and think about the questions. Then lead a discussion to explore the issues of government supported/controlled healthcare vs. consumer-paid healthcare. Consider how the Soviet centralized control of health care makes the Soviet system different from ours. Soviet doctors may be assigned a practice, for example, while American doctors set up their own. Equipment, office space, nursing help, and other resources may be government-allocated in the Soviet Union, but individually financed in the United States. And, American health care is still a consumer-paid system, despite the subsidizing that comes from insurance companies or government assistance. Challenge students to analyze how these contrasts may produce differing kinds and qualities of health care.

After students have read the lesson, ask them to speculate as to why there is less street crime in the Soviet Union than in the United States. Consider the lack of unemployment there, the stronger and harsher police force and penal system, and the commitment to conformity and group values learned in school.

Students will enjoy discussing Soviet family life and comparing it with American family life. Help students draw comparisons, using statistics given in the lesson and those they have researched. Guide them to probe for causes behind the figures. In examining Soviet alcoholism, for example, students might think about the tradition of drinking, the loss of religious meaning in the culture, possible feelings of powerlessness and fear, and a lack of responsibility or incentive on the job.

Lesson 17 is a summary lesson in which students are asked to analyze what constitutes democratic and undemocratic systems. After completing this lesson, and with it the program, students should be better equipped to understand and participate in our own democratic system.

Anti-Semitism — Prejudice against Jews, which can result in placing them in an inferior position and limiting their economic, political, or social rights.

Black Market — An unofficial, illegal system of selling scarce goods.

Capital — Factories, equipment, and other property, except land, which can be used to produce wealth.

Capitalism — Also called free enterprise or a free market system, it is an economic system in which capital, or means of production, is owned by individuals.

Communism — Both a form of government and economy. Under communism, the government, rather than individuals, owns factories, machinery, and other means of production.

Democracy — A form of government in which the people of a nation rule themselves.

Economics — The study of how goods and services are produced and distributed.

Economy — The management of the resources of a family, community, or nation, with a view toward production of goods and services.

Internal Exile — Confinement by the Soviet government of dissidents to a closed, remote area of the country.

Politburo — Major policy-making group of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee.

Political System — A form of government, usually based on an ideology, such as communism or democracy.

Propaganda — Information and ideas intentionally spread to promote or discredit a cause, group, nation, or other force.

Standard of Living — The economic level at which an individual, family, or nation lives. In determining standard of living, economists measure the value of goods and services produced or consumed during a certain period of time.

Totalitarian Government — A form of government which does not guarantee rights to its citizens, but instead controls and dominates all aspects — social, economic, political and cultural — of society.

©1987 Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

ISBN 0-8464-1004-8

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 1

Democracy

A ***democracy*** is a form of government in which the people of a nation rule themselves. The United States is the most influential and powerful democracy in the world. Here law-abiding citizens 18 and over have the right to vote in regularly scheduled elections for the candidates of their choice. Our multi-party system ensures candidates who represent a range of viewpoints. Challenging the wisdom of incumbent officials is not only permitted, but is a routine part of campaigning for votes. Once elected, officials may use their own judgments to analyze the issues they must decide upon. Almost always, however, they try to reflect the views and meet the needs of their constituents.

The rights of Americans are based on the United States Constitution, a document which has stood the tests of two hundred years. The Constitution establishes the structure of the government, how officials shall be chosen, and how power shall be shared or balanced among its parts. The Constitution, especially through its Bill of Rights, also guarantees certain fundamental rights to all American citizens. Among these are:

- Freedom to practice the religion of one's choice, or to practice none; freedom of speech and press; right to peaceful assembly and petition for redress of grievances.
- Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.
- Right to indictment by Grand Jury for serious crimes; right to refuse to testify against oneself; right to due process; freedom from being tried for the same crime more than once.
- Right to a jury trial, to counsel for defense, to be informed of the charges against one, and to be confronted with witnesses against one.
- Freedom from excessive bail.
- Freedom from cruel and unusual punishments.

Activity

► Answer the questions below on another sheet of paper.

1. What do you do in your daily life that could only be done in a democracy? Make a list.
2. Make a list of four people who have effectively exercised the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution. Find your examples by looking in recent newspapers, studying history books or encyclopedias, or talking to people. You may use a famous person, or even your next-door neighbor.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 2

Soviet Communism, a Totalitarian Form of Government

A totalitarian government, in contrast to a democracy, does not guarantee personal rights to its citizens. Rather, it exercises control over the economic, social, cultural, and political life of its people. The most powerful totalitarian nation in the world today is the Soviet Union where the Communist Party controls all aspects of the society — the government, the economy, the military, the social and cultural institutions. The Communist Party penetrates and dominates every aspect of community life and strictly enforces conformity to its policies.

The U.S.S.R., like the U.S., has a constitution that promises its people freedom of speech, press, worship, and assembly. Each citizen is also assured of job security and equal rights under the law. Soviet communism's founder, V.I. Lenin, pledged in an early speech to fight for "our truly democratic regime" against capitalism. Yet in actuality, the Soviet regime is in no way democratic. There is no freedom of speech, press, worship, or assembly. The Soviet political system is run by one party, the Communist Party, and the decisions of its leaders are enforced by a massive, often brutal secret police force, the KGB.

Soviet citizens are strongly encouraged to vote in general elections, and as many as 99.98% do. Voters, however, have no real choice. Only candidates approved by the authorities are allowed to run. At the local level, governing councils meet infrequently for a day or two at a time. They almost always make decisions unanimously, and have no resources to oppose orders that higher government officials tell them to approve. The major elected governing body is the Supreme Soviet, made up of 1500 members. It meets three or four days twice a year to give rubber-stamp approval to laws and budgets actually drawn up by the Communist Party. The real power lies in the Central Committee of the Party and its major policy-making group, the ***Politburo***. The most powerful person in the U.S.S.R. is the General Secretary of the Communist Party, who may also choose to serve simultaneously in another important government position.

The Soviet Union is composed of more than 100 different nationalities and ethnic groups. Only about half of the population is ethnically Russian. Some of the other nationalities feel disadvantaged by the domination of Soviet Communist and Russian national power, but any demands they make for greater national freedom are strongly resisted.

In fact the government is *highly centralized*. The highest ranking officials in the Communist Party make the important decisions and obedience is enforced down through the ranks. Power comes from the top downward, not from the people upward. Soviet leaders seek popular support, and use media, schools, workers' organizations, and other means to gain it. However, these leaders do not depend on that support to stay in power.

Activity

▶ Answer the questions below on another sheet of paper.

1. Identify key elements in the Soviet system that make it undemocratic. What in the American system prohibits these undemocratic elements?
2. The Soviet system is highly centralized. How is the United States government different?
3. The Soviet Union has one political party, the Communist Party. In the U.S., we have a two-party, and at times, a multi-party system. Why are opposition parties a necessary ingredient for a political system that truly serves the needs of the people?
4. Almost 100% of Soviet citizens vote, while in the U.S. fewer than half of all citizens use their right to vote for national or local leaders. Why do you think some Americans do not use their right to vote? Why do you think so many Soviet citizens vote?
5. American political parties have sometimes been criticized for offering no real choices to the voters. Do you think this criticism is ever true? Explain.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 3

Economic Systems

The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have very different economic systems. Americans sometimes call their economy a ***free market system***, also known as ***capitalism***. In capitalism, the ***capital*** — money, factories, and other means of production — are owned by people. Goods are produced and sold because of a desire to make a profit. Individuals may start businesses, employ people, and try to make profits. Most Americans believe their capitalist economy is very successful. They point out that most people are employed, few people are poor or hungry, there are enough consumer goods for people to buy, individuals are free to make choices and bear responsibility for their economic futures, and Americans enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world.

The Soviet economic system is ***communism***. Originally, communism meant the sharing of property in common. Communist economics was based on the ideal of people sharing the wealth of their nation. In the U.S.S.R., it is against the law to employ others for the purpose of making a profit, or to accumulate wealth. The government controls all capital, land, natural resources, communication, and transportation. The central government, through a series of five-year plans, decides how resources will be used, what goods will be produced, and how much workers will be paid. Standard wages for workers and standard prices for each kind of goods are set.

Both governments hope to improve conditions for their people. And each of their economies has advantages. In capitalism, the profit motive leads businesses, small and large, to fill the needs of consumers. The free market is more efficient, allocating resources in response to supply and demand. Individuals make more money when they cut waste and costs and offer for sale products which consumers desire. The centralized planning of communism makes it easier for the government to move labor and materials to meet national goals, such as building a railroad or drilling for oil. The communist system guarantees every adult a job and so, if only in theory, eliminates unemployment and poverty and provides a measure of economic security. However, the communist system undercuts initiative, since people have fewer economic incentives to work hard. The living standards of the Soviet people are relatively low, and the quality and variety of consumer products is poor. And, most importantly for Americans, the economic security of Soviet citizens comes at the expense of individual liberties and human rights.

Neither the American nor the Soviet economy is a pure example of its type. American capitalism includes some government-owned or regulated businesses, and the Soviet economy includes some private money-making efforts, such as individually-worked garden plots. Can you think of non-capitalist elements in our system?

Activity

▶ Read the following descriptions of events. Write ***capitalist*** or ***communist*** in the blank after each description to show in which kind of economy the event would take place.

1. A city wants a truck factory to locate in its area. The city offers to suspend local taxes on the factory for five years. A rival city tries to make a better offer.

   _____

2. Wanting to increase farm production, a government takes over ownership of all privately owned farms. Farmers receive wages and bonuses if they meet production quotas.

   _____

3. A large grocery store chain wants to buy a restaurant chain. The grocery company offers the restaurant stockholders a high price for their shares.

   _____

4. A government wants to develop a remote area with huge natural resources of coal and oil. The government builds thousands of new apartments there, constructs a railroad to connect the area to industrialized cities, and offers workers double the standard wage to relocate there.

   _____

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 4

The Right to Speak Out

In the United States, the First Amendment guarantees every citizen the right to openly criticize the government. Newspaper editorials, political campaign speeches, and protest marches are examples of American free speech. From Patrick Henry to Martin Luther King, Jr., the United States has a rich history of outspoken critics. In the Soviet Union, however, the individual's right to speak out, especially to challenge or criticize the government, is restricted. Dissent has been severely punished. Because most Soviets fear the omnipresent KGB (secret police) and its informants, only the boldest dare any public protest.

One story about dissent in Russia involves the Helsinki Accords monitoring group. This was a private group of Soviet citizens formed to monitor the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords. The Accords, signed in Helskinki in 1975 by many nations, among them the Soviet Union, were wide-ranging agreements confirming the post-World War II boundaries of Europe, that included a section on human rights. Nations signing the Accords agreed to respect the individual's right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; freedom of opinion and expression of ideas; right to assembly; right to participate in government; right to move freely within his or her country or leave it at will.

In May, 1976, Yuri Orlov, a Soviet physicist, organized a monitoring committee to alert Soviet citizens to their rights under the Helsinki agreement, and to publicize government violations of these rights. Members of the committee called attention to government denial of permission to leave the country, forced labor, separation of families, and torture of political prisoners. The group emphasized its role as gathering information and making it available to the public.

For his part in the activities, Orlov was sentenced to seven years of hard labor and five years of *internal exile*, or confinement to a closed, remote area of the country. To his judge, Orlov said, "You may sentence me to seven years in prison, or to five years. You may execute me, but I am certain that trials such as this one will not end the troubles to which the Helsinki Group documents attest and which I have tried to describe here." In October, 1986 Orlov was permitted to leave the Soviet Union in a complicated exchange involving a Russian spy arrested in the United States, and an American journalist held on trumped-up charges by the Soviets in retaliation.

Another member, computer scientist Anatoly Shcharansky, was sentenced in 1978 to 13 years in prison, falsely charged with treason. Shcharansky was released in February, 1986 in another complicated prisoner exchange. A third member, Tatyana Osipova, a computer programmer, was arrested in 1980 and sentenced to five years in a labor camp and three in internal exile.

By 1982, all but three of the group's 22 members had been sent out of the country or were in jail or prison camps. Under further threats from the KGB, the group disbanded.

Activity

▶ Answer the questions below on another sheet of paper. Then discuss with other class members.

1. Why do you think the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords were necessary? Why do you think the Soviet Union signed them?
2. What is the U.S. government's position on dissent? What does the First Amendment say?
3. Can you recall dissenters from American history who took risks to call government to account? Did the dissenters succeed? Were they able to make changes in their society, and at what price?
4. Americans often consider it their right not only to criticize the government, but also to make fun of politicians. Can you give any examples of public humor at the expense of government officials?

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 5

The Individual's Right to Correct Information

At one Pioneer Palace, a kind of Communist "Y" for children, we had a spirited discussion with junior high schoolers about press freedom. When we criticized their state's control of the media, one girl burst out, "Are you suggesting that our government acts as a censor?" We said we were more than suggesting it. She replied, "You're wrong. We can print anything we want — except, of course, something that undermines public morality." In that one exception, to our minds, is a world of repression; to theirs, a world of harmony.

— reporter for People magazine, special issue, April 6, 1987

In the U.S.S.R., the government decides what is important for its people to know, and it is difficult for people to get more information than that. The control of information begins at the highest level. Meetings of the Politburo and Central Committee, for example, are closed to the public and transcripts or summaries of proceedings are rarely published.

Soviet officials feel it is their duty to see that news from abroad does not threaten or discredit their society or their government. No one in the U.S.S.R. can simply set up a publishing or broadcasting company. All means for reproducing and transmitting information, even office photocopiers, are under extremely tight controls. In addition, the government exercises control over the content of all publicly circulated information. Soviet news provides only the official point of view of an event. Foreign news materials are unavailable to ordinary citizens. Attempts by Soviet citizens to listen to foreign radio broadcasts by the Voice of America and Radio Liberty are discouraged by government jamming of foreign broadcasts. Foreign journalists in the Soviet Union are restricted in many ways, have electronically bugged apartments, and may suffer harassment by the KGB.

The average Soviet citizen loses a great deal of time because of inadequate information. The Soviet airline, Aeroflot, for example, never releases departure times or discloses if seats are available for a flight. Travelers must simply line up and wait at the airport. Because there is little advertising, shopping is an adventure punctuated by long waits in line. For Soviet citizens, a scrap of information is a prize.

News is restricted so as not to alarm the public or suggest problems in Soviet society. Airplane crashes, for example, are not reported. Since Aeroflot does not take the names of passengers, it may be days before families of crash victims discover their fates. In 1974, a murderer who had killed several young women was stalking the streets of Moscow. Women were warned about the danger at work, but the newspapers reported nothing. Even after the killer was caught, few believed they were safe. "They may have caught one," said a woman, "but there is a second killer. They have not caught the main one."

In 1986, a nuclear energy plant at Chernobyl in the Ukraine exploded causing many fatalities and scattering radiation over a wide area of Europe. Not until there was an international outcry did the Soviet newspapers make any mention of the incident.

There is a feeling, however, that the policy of glasnost, or openness proclaimed by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986, may result in changes in this area. Recent news reporting seems under fewer restrictions than in the past. In 1987, the Soviet government stopped jamming Voice of America, although it continued to interfere with Radio Liberty.

Activity

▶ Mark the following statements *true* or *false*.

1. _____ At home in Moscow, Anna Padlev can watch the sessions of the Politburo on a special television channel.
2. _____ Chicago passengers taking a flight to New York can call the airport to find out when their flight will depart.
3. _____ Soviet citizens often see non-government-authorized news footage of protestors outside the Kremlin or exposés of corruption in government.
4. _____ The average Soviet family receives several newspapers and magazines from other countries.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 6A

The Arts

In few countries do the arts occupy such a vital and exposed position as they do in Russia. . . .The public wants books, films and paintings to say what they dare not say, to bring color and diversity to their monochrome lives, whereas the party wants to enlist writers and painters as persuasive and acceptable propagandists for the Soviet system. Artists are caught in the middle.

— *Michael Binyon, Life in Russia (New York: Berkley Books, 1983).*

Artists in Russia live by a curious paradox. On the one hand, they are regarded as enormously important. The average Soviet citizen is likely to be passionately concerned about film, poetry, and music. A good Soviet poet can command an hour of prime time TV or fill a football stadium with fans for a poetry reading. Ordinary Soviet people place flowers on the gravesites of their famous authors and can recite page after page of favorite passages.

On the other hand, the Soviet government prohibits artists from producing art that is not acceptable to the state. The government preserves for itself the right to determine what is approved art and what is not. If a work of art is declared to be "anti-Soviet" its author can be punished under laws prohibiting expression of views defaming the Soviet order. As the poet Mandelstam once said, "Russia is the only place where poetry is really important — they'll kill you for it." Indeed, Mandelstam became an example of his own saying. Imprisoned under Stalin, he died in a labor camp.

Russian literary greats have suffered, in and out of prison, since the days of the Tsars. Pushkin, Pasternak, and Solzhenitsyn were all persecuted for their writing. The government view that art should advance the cause of the state leads to the repression of some artists and the reward of others. Anna Akhmatova, a modern poet, has suffered greatly. These lines are hers:

For some the wind can freshly blow
For some the sunlight fade at ease,
But we, made partners in our dread,
Hear but the grating of the keys,
And heavy-booted soldiers' tread.

In the early 1980s, poet Irina Ratushinskaya was warned by the KGB not to distribute her writings. They were unacceptable to the state. Irina persisted, was arrested, and was sentenced to seven years at hard labor. From Barashevo prison, she smuggled out more writing — accounts of hunger strikes, solitary confinement in freezing cells, and denial of medical treatment. Finally, in December, 1986, Irina was permitted to leave the country.

Mikhail Baryshnikov, a famous ballet dancer, in 1974 defected from the Soviet Union to the United States. He said that he wanted the freedom to grow as a dancer — to experiment with different styles of dance, to engage in all forms of dance, to dance with a variety of dance partners. In the Soviet Union, he was limited to the one dance company to which he was assigned, and to dancing only the specific ballet dances authorized by the Communist authorities.

A significant number of other leading Soviet dancers and musicians have also defected to gain greater artistic freedom.

Yet accepted writer Yulian Semyonov, whose crime novels do not challenge the state, actually receives help in the form of ideas and factual material from the KGB. Semyonov lives in relative luxury and freedom.

The Soviet artist does not have freedom of expression. What he does have is a reverence from the public and, as long as he maintains the approval of the Communist Party, a financial security that American artists may not experience. Soviet artists, for example, need not sell their art to support their families. They rely on the communist system to provide them with a basic income. Moreover, the artist is a romantic figure in the Soviet Union, partly because of the aura of danger that surrounds him. He may attract a following simply because he expresses protest, whether his work has artistic merit or not.

Activity

▶ Discuss the opening quote by Michael Binyon. How does the life of an artist in the Soviet Union compare with the life of an artist in the United States?

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 6B

The Arts

It goes without saying that [artists' unions] should take an active, principled stand in cases where works appear that discredit our Soviet reality. On this point we should be firm. The party was not and can never be indifferent to the ideological orientation of our art.

— *Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party, 1964-1982*

Although the attitude expressed above by Leonid Brezhnev still prevails in general, some loosening of rigid controls on art began under Mikhail Gorbachev, who became General Secretary of the Communist Party in March, 1985. This new attitude is called ***glasnost***, or openness. So far, however, it does not seem helpful to artists who openly protest current government policies.

The best examples of ***glasnost*** are in film. A film called ***Repentance*** began closed showings to select audiences in Moscow in late 1986. Although a thinly disguised depiction of the terrors of Stalinist purgings and labor camps, it is expected to be released to public theatres and even shown on TV. Another film, ***Tema***, has been released after having been repressed for seven years. Of those years, its director, Gleb Panfilov, said, "I realized that my future plans to make films about real life, modern life, were in fact unrealizable. I understood that no action taken by me or anyone else would have any effect." Now Panfilov has benefitted from ***glasnost***.

There has also been some loosening of controls over rock music. There are no charts in the Soviet Union. There is only Melodiya, the state recording company. Melodiya controls the rock scene by deciding who will make records, and who won't. The state also decides who will get the scarce amplifiers and synthesizers. One rock musician, Boris Grebenschikov, enjoyed enormous unofficial popularity, but refused to give up artistic control to the Ministry of Culture. Therefore he could not record or play in concert halls. Boris engaged in the widespread practice of unofficial, unauthorized recording. Now, however, the state has relented. Boris is allowed to sing his own lyrics in his own way. He has even recorded with Melodiya.

Activity

► Identify where, in the U.S. or the U.S.S.R., the following situations would most likely be found.

1. A group called the Beastie Boys perform in a large city concert hall where their music is uncensored. City officials, however, ask them to remove a sexually suggestive stage prop.

   _____

2. A poet reading his poems in a large stadium draws 80,000 fans.

   _____

3. A rock star cannot obtain enough amplifiers and synthesizers to perform. A friend from another country, Cat Stevens, gives him a synthesizer.

   _____

4. A painter must sell his paintings in order to make a living from his art.

   _____

5. A contemporary poet is imprisoned for poems that criticize the government.

   _____

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 7A

Arrest, Trial, and Punishment

"We believe in the certainty of rights. They believe in the certainty of punishment."

— CBS Special Report on the Soviet Union "Seven Days in May" June 24, 1987

In the United States, the Bill of Rights protects those accused of crimes. The accused has the right to be represented by a lawyer at all stages of criminal cases. The prosecution is prohibited from using evidence or testimony obtained illegally by police. The police must inform suspects that they have the right not to answer questions and the right to speak with a lawyer before questioning. Evidence that favors the accused must be disclosed by the prosecution. A person cannot be put on trial twice for the same crime, if found not guilty the first time. The accused has the right to a jury trial.

Perhaps most important, the accused has the right to refuse to testify against, or incriminate, himself. This means that diaries and personal papers are also protected. An accused person cannot be persuaded through threats, promises, or other means to waive his Fifth Amendment rights.

In the Soviet Union, however, those suspected of crimes have, in practice, few rights. When a Soviet citizen is arrested, he may not hire a lawyer to defend him until an accusation is handed down, the equivalent of our indictment. In the meantime, he may be kept in confinement, sometimes in isolation. In politically significant cases, such as those in which dissidents are involved, it is routine for the KGB to enter a suspect's home during his absence, search it, and confiscate materials regarded as incriminating. The KGB may also take suspects away without explanation any time of the day or night, question them, and subject them to intense psychological pressure. A suspect may be forced to make a confession. The government's pre-trial investigation often determines guilt. In such cases, the trial is a formality, held, in effect, to decide punishment. There is no jury system. Most trials are presided over by three people —a judge, and two citizens without formal legal training. The authorities can and do command a judge to convict someone they want to convict.

Punishment is severe by American standards — five or ten years in a labor camp or internal exile for protesting or for selling goods on the ***black market*** — an unofficial, illegal system of selling scarce goods. Conditions for prisoners are harsh. Hard labor in freezing temperatures, beatings, and denial of necessities and medical treatment can leave prisoners with lifelong physical disabilities. During the years of Josef Stalin's rule of the U.S.S.R. — mid-1930's to the mid-1950's — some 15 to 30 million people were executed or died in a network of prison camps known as the "gulag."

Consider these real cases of more recent prisoners in the Soviet Union.

Anatoly Marchenko spent 30 years as a Soviet prisoner. In 1957, he was sentenced to a labor camp for his part in a fight in his barracks at a hydroelectric project. He escaped two years later, was caught trying to leave the country, and sentenced to six years' imprisonment for treason. In 1968, he was arrested for passport illegalities. Before his term was up, he was found guilty of slandering the state. Later he was exiled to Siberia and sentenced to additional terms. One of his offenses was writing a book, ***My Testimony***, about conditions in labor camps. The book was smuggled into the West and was published in several languages. Repeated hardships and beatings left him partially deaf, with impaired eyesight, and suffering from headaches. Nearing release in December, 1986, he suddenly died mysteriously. Conflicting reports about the cause of death were given, and his wife was refused permission to see his body.

Vladimir Troyansky, a student in Moscow, a friend named Jimaldayev, and two young women were convicted of selling Japanese scarves hon the black market — for personal profit. Troyansky and Jimaldayev had bought the scarves for 9½ rubles (about $15.00) each from a foreigner and sold them to the women for 11 rubles (about $17.50). All four were arrested while loading the boxes of scarves into a car. Troyansky got five years in a labor camp, Jimaldayev got three years, and both women got two years. The women, however, were released because a few months earlier the government had declared amnesty for women prisoners with young children.

Activities for this lesson are in Lesson 7B.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 7B

Arrest, Trial, and Punishment

In the Soviet Union, dissidents are especially likely to be arrested and charged with vague crimes such as hooliganism, defaming the state, disturbing public order, and anti-Soviet agitation. Some dissidents are punished without benefit of trial. Some are sent to mental institutions where they are subjected to drugging and straitjacketing, and kept in rooms with patients who are violent or otherwise dangerous. Some attract the attention of news media in the West and attain release because the Soviet leadership wants to avoid negative publicity. Here are some examples:

Nadezhda Fradkova is a Jewish woman who worked as a linguist in Leningrad in 1978. She wanted to be a practicing Jew and found it impossible in the Soviet Union. She therefore applied to leave the country. She was told that, by Soviet law, her parents had to approve her request, in spite of the fact she was 31 and had never met the father who left home before she was born. She lost her job. She protested her situation with a hunger strike in 1983. She was taken to a hospital and forcefed. In 1984, she was taken to a psychiatric hospital and registered as mentally disturbed. Then, she was sentenced to a labor camp in the Arctic North. Finally, in 1987 Fradkova was permitted to go to Israel.

Anna Rosnovsky, a musician, was able to leave the Soviet Union in 1974. She was not permitted, however, to take her fine Italian violin, which had belonged to her father and grandfather. Anna's mother was able to get the violin out of the country to Anna later. As a result, the mother was arrested and sentenced on the next day to prison. There she was kept for a year in solitary confinement. Next she was held in a mental hospital for four years. When an international psychiatric association protested her situation, she was released, in a state of depression from which she has never emerged.

Nina Kovalenko, an artist, demonstrated in favor of U.S. journalist Nicholas Daniloff who was held by the Soviet government on trumped-up spy charges in September, 1986. Nina was arrested on September 25, 1986, held in a psychiatric hospital, and injected with drugs.

Anatoly Koryagin was first arrested in 1981. A psychiatrist, he protested the confinement of dissidents in psychiatric hospitals. He had examined a dissident in a mental ward and pronounced him sane. Koryagin was sentenced to a labor camp and to prison. He finally was released and allowed to leave the Soviet Union in April, 1987.

Activity

► Answer the questions below on another sheet of paper.

Questions for Lesson 7A

1. Analyze the opening quotation of Lesson 7A. Discuss the difference it reveals between the American and Soviet systems of justice.
2. Discuss the cases presented in Lesson 7A. Which of the prisoners described seemed to have been treated with undue harshness? Which with leniency? How do you think these prisoners would have fared in the American judicial system?

Questions for Lesson 7B

1. Compare the abuses described in Lesson 7B with the rights guaranteed Americans in the Bill of Rights. Refer to Lesson 1 to refresh your memory of these basic rights.
2. Find and read Marchenko's ***My Testimony*** or Alexander Solzhenitsyn's ***The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956***. Write or present a report about conditions for prisoners in the Soviet Union in the Stalinist period and in more recent times.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 8

Freedom to Worship

Legally, Soviet citizens are permitted to worship. The 1977 Soviet constitution guarantees the "right to profess any religion or to profess none, to celebrate religious rites, or to conduct atheistic propaganda." In practice, worship is actively discouraged. The government desires that the individual's highest loyalty be to the state, not God or a specific church. Since the communist revolution the number of churches and mosques has been greatly reduced and the number of synagogues has become miniscule. A similar development has occurred with rabbis, pastors, ulemas, and other religious leaders. Some Soviet citizens admit they pray at home rather than attend church. Public worship isn't good for career advancement, and the Communist Party refuses membership to believers. It is against the law for religious training of children to take place outside the home. Teachers of Hebrew have often been imprisoned.

Different churches, moreover, are treated differently by the Soviet government. The Russian Orthodox Church, the official church of Russia under the Tsars, meets with less disapproval and less difficulty than other churches. There are more career opportunities for Russian Orthodox observers, for example, than for other kinds of believers. There is also a certain tolerance for Islamic worshipers. On the other hand, Lithuanian and Ukrainian Catholics, the Baptist churches and evangelical Christian groups have been persecuted.

The government makes it especially difficult for Jews. Subjected to anti-Semitism in the days of the Tsars, many Jews supported the revolution by the Bolsheviks in 1917. Yet the revolution failed to bring equality for Jews. In 1952, Stalin, in the course of one night, murdered 24 leading Jewish poets, writers and intellectuals. This massacre coincided with a reign of anti-Jewish terror that lasted until after Stalin's death in February, 1953. This reign of terror included the notorious "Doctors' Plot" in which a group of leading Jewish medical specialists were accused of planning the murder of Stalin and other Soviet leaders.

Today, younger Jews find higher educational opportunities increasingly out of reach, and older Jews are being denied promotions to positions of authority. Jews who wish to be religiously observant find it very difficult to do so. Anti-Semitism is still a major problem in the Soviet Union.

Activity

► Use another sheet of paper to answer the questions below.

1. What role did freedom of worship play in the founding of the American colonies?
2. How does the U.S. conception of freedom of religion differ from the Soviet Union's?
3. What is the importance of religion in the life of an individual? Discuss.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 9A

The Right to Move About Freely

Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect, but we have never had to put up a wall to keep our people in.

— John F. Kennedy, President of the United States, 1961-1963

Citizens of the United States may travel without restrictions within their country. Applications for passports for travel abroad are easily obtained. Traveling freely is not taken for granted, however, in the Soviet Union. Citizens must ask permission to move from city to city, and must be registered in the city where they live. Every citizen must have an ***internal passport***, or a personal identification paper which allows the government to monitor and control his or her movement within the country. Foreign tourists and journalists find vast areas of the U.S.S.R. are simply closed to them. Unlike American citizens, Soviet citizens do not have the right to leave their country.

The general Soviet policy is not to permit citizens to leave the country. However, Soviet leaders have at various times loosened controls to permit the exit of certain groups not regarded as ethnically Russian — for example, Jews who sought permission to emigrate to Israel, the Jewish homeland. In the 1970s, many Jews were allowed to leave, largely as a result of Western pressure on the Soviet government and a Soviet desire for improved trade with the U.S. In 1979, the flood of departures peaked at 51,000. Since then, controls have tightened. In 1986, less than 1,000 left.

In an arbitrary and capricious manner, the government has repeatedly refused exit visas to a certain number of Jews who apply to leave. These Jews are called ***refuseniks***. Of the 1.8 million Jews in the country (less than 1% of the Soviet population), as many as 400,000 have expressed an interest in leaving the country. Of these, about 11,000-12,000 are refuseniks. Typically, refuseniks suffer persecution and a long wait. Below are two stories of refuseniks.

Elena Keiss-Kuna, an electrical engineer, and her family applied for an exit visa in 1974. Her sister Anna Rosnovsky was already in the West. Elena was told she would be ineligible for a visa until five years after she left her job. She quit immediately. After 13 years, the family is still waiting for an exit visa. Their son Andrei is 18, eligible for Soviet military service. Elena knows that if Andrei is drafted, he will be considered in possession of military secrets, and the Soviet authorities will have another excuse to close the doors for many more years.

Inessa Flerov was identified as the only appropriate bone marrow donor for her brother in Israel, ill with leukemia. Citing a medical emergency, she applied in March, 1986, for permission to leave the Soviet Union. Her bone marrow, transplanted to her brother, could possibly save his life. After a five-month delay, the Soviet government in August gave Inessa and her daughters permission to leave, but denied it to her husband. Authorities gave no assurances they could ever be reunited. Mindful of other families split for decades, Inessa waited. Finally, in early November, after much publicity about the matter in the West, the whole family was allowed to leave. It was, however, too late for Inessa's brother, who died shortly after his sister's arrival in Israel.

Activity

▶ Find out, by calling a U.S. Passport Office or writing your congressman, what Americans must do if they want to travel outside the country. Are there any restrictions on nations they may visit? What is the process for moving to another country?

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 9B

The Right to Move About Freely

An international committee of physicians was formed in late 1986 to analyze and publicize the medical condition of Jewish political prisoners. A member of the committee summarized some of their findings by noting that a Soviet Jew brings a lot of trouble down on himself when he applies for an exit visa. Usually, the applicant and often his or her spouse are demoted or dismissed from their jobs. This is sometimes followed by police harassment, being forced to leave a current residence, or being charged with slandering the state. Here are two more examples:

Masha and Vladimir Slepak have been waiting for 17 years for exit visas. She is a radiologist and he is a radio/TV engineer. They have long been unable to work in their professional fields. The Slepaks have experienced numerous beatings, house arrests, confiscations of letters and photos, prison terms, and five years of exile in Siberia.

Ida Nudel first applied to leave the Soviet Union in 1971. She was formally refused for the first time in 1972. After a variety of protest activities, she was arrested and sent to Siberia for four years. When she was released in 1982, she went home to Moscow, but was refused permission to reside there. She was forced to leave within 72 hours of her arrival. Moving from town to town, she was refused over and over. After six months of wandering, she managed to register in Bendery, Moldavia, where she was nevertheless harassed by the police. (As we go to press in October, 1987, we have just been informed that after sixteen years of trying — Ida Nudel has finally been given permission to leave the Soviet Union.)

The Soviet government may be concerned about the precedent emigrating Jews set. If Jews are allowed to go, then other dissatisfied minorities may agitate for the same right. A clamor to leave makes Soviet society look unsuccessful.

Soviet authorities defend their acts. They believe they are protecting their nation from a dangerous tendency to disunity and rebellion. They believe all ethnic groups must unify into one citizenry, working together for the good of the whole. To them, refuseniks are antisocial, unpatriotic troublemakers.

Activity

► Answer the following questions on another sheet of paper.

1. Discuss the refuseniks and their treatment at the hands of the Soviet government.
2. Sympathetic people in the West have sometimes brought pressure, especially through publicity, to bear on Soviet authorities. The Soviet government has claimed that the question of emigration from the Soviet Union is an internal affair. What do you think about this argument? Can human rights ever be an internal affair? What about the Helsinki Accords?

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 10

Education

In spite of the fact that Soviet children tend to be pampered and indulged, their education is very disciplined. Children attend school for longer hours than American students, six days a week. While their American counterparts are encouraged in individualized creative expression, Soviet children are trained in conformity. They must all hold their pencils in one "best" way, and their kindergarten drawings tend to be nearly identical. For Soviet educators, there is a correct way to complete an assignment, and all the children should follow that method.

Soviet teachers are poorly paid. They make about $225 per month, less than the standardized pay for factory workers. Yet, like many American teachers, they accept heavy responsibility with enthusiasm. Soviet teachers work with ancient, worn equipment, and have neither calculators nor computers for their classes. What they do have is power to push their students. An open house or family night in a Soviet school is an opportunity for teachers to publicly grill parents about their children's school problems. If parents do not respond to their children's academic shortcomings, a parent's supervisor at work may be notified to bring additional pressure to bear.

The emphasis in Soviet schools is on math, science, and political education. Students focus on retaining facts rather than critical thinking. In the last four decades, some Soviet scientists have performed brilliantly, beating the West into space and doing well in other technical fields. This success led American educators to study Soviet schools in the 1950s and try to apply some Soviet methods here.

The Communist Party sees the schools as an appropriate place for Party propaganda. Children are brought up to revere Lenin, to accept official Soviet values, and to join the Young Communist League. In this process, some learn the dichotomy of Soviet life: in public, one must express certain attitudes; true feelings must be reserved for the privacy of home.

Activity

▶ Answer the questions below on another sheet of paper.

1. Schools in every country are places where patriotism and approved values are taught — and where heroes are honored. What values and heroes are provided in American schools? How are they presented? Think of history class, extra-curricular activities, sports, and peers. Make a list.
2. Make a list of the major differences between the American and Soviet systems of education. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
3. Americans learn about heroes in school, but also learn about some of the shortcomings of heroes. This is not so common in Soviet schools. On the other hand, sometimes Soviet heroes fall completely out of favor — their pictures are removed from classrooms and public buildings and their names disappear from history books. What do you think causes these differences in the way American and Soviet citizens view their heroes?

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 11

Making a Living

We are familiar with generally-held American values regarding work. Young people want a good education as preparation for a well-paying job. Money is an accepted motivation, and competition is part of the scene. If you don't perform well, someone else may get the promotion you want. You may even get fired. Although the law may allow you unemployment compensation, it does not guarantee you a job. You must find your own job.

In the Soviet Union, every citizen *is* guaranteed a job. After schooling is completed, the government considers each graduate's entire background, and then assigns him or her to a job. The job may provide a multitude of services and rewards. At the Leninsky Komsomol Automobile Plant in Moscow, workers have a cinema, an auditorium for amateur theatre presentations, a library, and dozens of classes in arts, crafts, ballet, and gymnastics. There is also on-site medical care and excellent daycare for workers' children. However, workers also must attend regular indoctrination sessions on Soviet ideology. Soviet labor unions are not permitted to bargain collectively or to go on strike. While they arrange for better working conditions and paid vacations, and help provide workers with scarce food items or consumer goods, their major function is not to represent the workers. Rather, it is to mobilize the labor force to serve the interests of the state.

In modern Soviet society, wages are considerably below those in the United States. The average monthly Soviet salary is about 200 rubles ($318.00). Yet Russian goods and services are not correspondingly cheaper. A recent study comparing weekly food costs concluded that it takes more than three times as many working hours for the average Russian to pay for his food than it does for the American wage earner. An average compact car costs about $12,700; a color television about $1,100.

In early 1987, rock singer Alla Pugachova invited Cyndi Lauper to give a concert in Moscow. Cyndi would have to settle for concert fees of less than $10,000. But Alla herself makes a standard wage of about $75 per performance. The most successful clothing designer in the Soviet Union is Slava Zaitsev. His position is comparable to that of Calvin Klein or Saint Laurent in the West. Zaitsev earns a standard 250 rubles ($398) per month. He tells Western newsmen, "I care nothing for money. All I need is my work and my friends."

Many Soviet citizens express this attitude. In contrast, Americans seem materialistic. Yet in the Soviet Union where work is a social duty, not a way of getting ahead, on-the-job incentive seems sadly lacking. It is very difficult to discipline a worker, even for blatant tardiness, intoxication, laziness, or absenteeism. Consequently, meeting production quotas is frustrating for Soviet managers. Waste and inefficiency are ongoing concerns. There are many stories of repairmen sleeping on the job, machinery left to rust outdoors, animals on collective farms going hungry in dirty stalls, and crops ruining in the fields.

Not all these problems result from laziness. Often workers are idle because supplies for factories are slow to arrive, or machinery is broken. Worker motivation and more efficient management are both key challenges facing Soviet leaders today.

Activity

► Soviet spokespeople emphasize economic rights and criticize American unemployment and homelessness. Americans emphasize personal rights and criticize the lack of freedom in the Soviet system. Discuss.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 12

A Place to Live

The 1917 revolution made life better for most Soviet citizens. Many of the children and grandchildren of uneducated, impoverished peasants are now factory workers, teachers, doctors, and engineers. Now, instead of living in small huts, most Soviets live in modern apartments provided at low cost by the government.

In spite of massive building efforts, however, there is a severe housing shortage. And Soviet housing is much less spacious and distinctive than American. As one journalist remarked, what passes for a luxury apartment building there resembles a low-income housing project in the United States.

Inna Churikova is an actress, a star by Russian standards. She is married to a successful director, Gleb Panfilov. With their eight-year-old son, they are lucky to have a four-room apartment south of Moscow. Perhaps the most successful Soviet writer, Yulian Semyonov lives in a five-room apartment in a Moscow neighborhood that is the equivalent of our Park Avenue.

Galina Fedyana is a Soviet middle-class success story. A seamstress by day, she is also a local government leader. Her apartment reflects her position. Galina, her husband, daughter, and son-in-law occupy an apartment consisting of a living room, kitchen, bath, and two bedrooms. Galina has promised to help one of her constituents — a woman who lives with her husband and eleven-year-old son in one room. The woman complained that she applied for a new apartment in 1978. In 1987, she was still waiting. The housing scarcity also makes mobility difficult. It is hard to move if no apartments are available.

Soviet apartment dwellers often share baths and kitchens with other families. In fact, in some cases, two different families may live in the same apartment. Other comforts may also be lacking. In 1985, 29% of all state-owned urban housing had no hot water, 17% had no indoor baths, 11% had no central heating, and 8% had no water. This was urban housing. Matters are worse in the countryside where 34% of all Soviet citizens still live.

Activity

► Take your own poll to determine American housing conditions. Choose ten families or individuals, representing ten separate houses or apartments. Then answer the questions below.

1. How many individuals, altogether, lived in the ten homes?

   _____

2. How many rooms, not counting bathrooms, did the ten homes contain, altogether?

   _____

3. Divide the answer for 2 by the answer for 1 to determine how many rooms there were per person:

   _____

4. What were the total number of bathrooms in your sample?

   _____

5. How many of the ten homes had their own yard or garden?

   _____

6. How do your American examples compare with the Soviet examples given above?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 13

Consumer Goods

In the U.S., prices for consumer goods are usually controlled by supply and demand. Department stores have huge selections of clothing, shoes, and electronic goods, all of high quality. Only the family budget limits purchases. In the Soviet Union, however, shortages make shopping an adventure and a chore. Because common items are often unobtainable, hoarding and bartering are a way of life. In a now-famous example, a Soviet newspaper sent a reporter for a night in a hotel without an overnight bag. After traipsing from store to store all day in search of razor, toothbrush, and pajamas, he came up empty-handed and spent an uncomfortable night.

Many Soviet consumer goods are scarce. Only about one-tenth of Soviet citizens own cars, about one-fifth own vacuum cleaners, and one in fifteen has a telephone. Spare car parts are so hard to find that most drivers routinely remove the windshield wipers each time they park the car. The government waiting list is the official way of obtaining goods, but long waits lead people to use illegal or unconventional means. Facing a wait of several years for a new car, many patronize a used car lot, where they bargain directly with owners and pay twice as much as for a new car. Salespeople hold back merchandise for friends or customers who pay them small bribes. ***Black-market*** entrepreneurs get hold of foreign or illegally manufactured goods to sell to friends or friends of friends. The black market is an unofficial system of buying and selling scarce and better quality items. Although illegal, such activities account for a large part of trade in consumer goods.

Shoppers at government-owned stores must be patient. Long lines are the rule. The average urban Soviet woman spends 14 hours a week, two hours a day, standing in line to purchase necessities. Without capitalist-style advertising, moreover, Soviet shoppers do not always know where or how to find what they need.

Soviet citizens often complain about poorly made goods. Even the government judges that only 1.4% of consumer products measure up to international standards. Purchased clothes and shoes come unstitched, mechanized toys do not work, or milk is spoiled. Producers have little incentive to make better products. Without a profit motive or competition, a factory manager pays more attention to his government-set quota than consumer satisfaction.

Activity

▶ Mark the following descriptions of events ***Soviet*** or ***American*** to show where they would most likely take place.

1. A going-out-of-business sale with half-price merchandise is advertised in a city newspaper.

   _____

2. Over 10,000 people wait in a long line for two days to buy area rugs, a scarce article.

   _____

3. A housewife studies local grocery store circulars to find the best prices for her family's food.

   _____

4. A butcher accepts a bribe to sell a customer a better quality of meat than is on display.

   _____

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 14

Health Care

Better health care was one of the earliest achievements of Soviet communism. The rise in life expectancy, decline in infant mortality, and elimination of epidemics, especially in rural areas, were dramatic. For years, conditions steadily improved. But now statistics show Soviet health is actually worsening. Life expectancy for men in the U.S.S.R. was 66 years in 1965-66, but only 61.9 years in 1980. Infant mortality, 22.9 deaths per thousand births in 1971, rose to 28 per thousand in 1980.

Why? Many reasons are offered. The Soviet Union's high alcoholism rate harms the health of its citizens. Also, the prevalence of abortion as the major form of birth control affects the health of women and their subsequent newborn children.

Perhaps most important, the Soviet Union spends less on health care than most advanced nations. Doctors, for example, are poorly paid. They earn less than the average factory worker. Standards of hygiene are low, and equipment is outdated. Medicines are difficult to obtain. The Soviet pharmaceutical industry, without competition or advertising, does not produce enough drugs and cannot communicate what is available. But most of all, patients complain about a lack of responsibility or incentive among medical workers.

The Soviet practice of bribing professionals whose services should be free can be seen in hospitals. Families of patients often give gifts or money to doctors to get more attention for the patient's case — or to the nurses' aides to ensure that bed linens will be changed frequently. Corruption in the health service had become so widespread that, in 1981, Leonid Brezhnev, then General Secretary of the Communist Party, called for reform in a speech to the party congress.

In the United States there is only one physician for about every 550 people, while in the Soviet Union there is a physician for about every 265 people. In the United States, moreover, not everyone can afford treatment. However, insurance plans help most people. About 85% of Americans are covered by private or employer-paid insurance plans, Medicare, Medicaid, or military insurance. About 15% must pay for their own health care. Here, too, doctors complain of malpractice suits and consumers complain of high prices. These are the disadvantages of a privately-supported medical system. Yet statistics show that the American system is successful. Current American life expectancy, for example, is 74.7 years, and American infant mortality is only 10.6 deaths per thousand births. In spite of its problems, American medical care is among the best in the world.

Activity

▶ Answer the questions below in class discussion.

1. Many people feel that health care is a right that should be provided by the government to all citizens. Others feel that the quality of health care declines when health care professionals are government employees rather than independent business people receiving payment through the consumer. Despite subsidization by insurance or government, most doctors in the U.S. remain self-employed, and most hospitals are private businesses. The differences between the American system and the Soviet system make for differing qualities of health care. Explain.
2. Analyze health care in your community. Are there some ways it might be improved?

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 15

Crime

In the U.S., many people fear street crime — being beaten or mugged for one's money or jewelry, especially in big cities. There is also street crime in the Soviet Union. A few years ago, for example, Soviet writer Valentin Rasputin was brutally beaten in Irkutsk by a gang who wanted his blue jeans — a valuable consumer item. In spite of stories like this, however, street crime is less prevalent in the U.S.S.R. than in the U.S. Bribery, corruption, and black market dealing are more common Soviet crimes. Consider these examples.

- A taxi driver explains that he made a 500-ruble payoff ($795) to a housing minister for a tiny, old-fashioned house. A bribe for a modern apartment would have cost more. On the official waiting list, he could have received housing in 20 or 30 years.
- Videos of Western films, copied in back rooms or garages, are sold on the black market for 200 to 250 rubles ($318-$398). Current favorites are ***Rambo: First Blood Part II*** and ***Last Tango in Paris***.
- The Romanovs, directors of a timber station, take part of the timber workers' wages, cheat them in the station store and canteen, and force them to do unpaid work for the Romanov family. The Romanovs pay off officials at the district level to ignore worker complaints.
- Parents bribe university examiners to give good marks to their son, to guarantee his acceptance by the university.
- A Moscow housewife bribes a repairman 30 rubles ($48) to fix her refrigerator on the same day he diagnoses its problem. Otherwise, before she got it fixed she would spend two or three months on the official waiting list.
- A chemist avoids taking his car to a gas station. Instead, he pays the driver of a state-owned car to siphon government-owned gas out of its tank.

While there is bribery and corruption in the United States, it is less prevalent than in the Soviet Union. Here it is vigorously prosecuted; there it seems to be the usual way of doing business.

Activity

▶ Answer the question below on another sheet of paper.

One analyst of Soviet society claims that the bribery and corruption Soviet citizens engage in is a form of unofficial capitalism. What do you think he means? Discuss.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 16

Family Life

Soviet family life is warm and meaningful. Children are cherished, and friends are valued. Entertaining friends and family at home, even in cramped quarters, with a large meal and talking late into the evening is a Soviet tradition.

But the pleasures of family life are limited by the rigors of Soviet society. Most couples find it impossible, for example, to have more than one child. Abortion is the major form of birth control; the average Soviet woman has six during her childbearing years. Space and money for children are both scarce. Soviet women have little time for motherhood. They make up 51% of the work force, and nearly all (92%) are full time workers or students. Women also do virtually all the housework and shopping, putting in 80 hours of work per week while men put in 50 hours.

Soviet women, who are engineers, doctors, judges, and factory workers on the job, work at home with far fewer conveniences and mechanical aids than American housewives have. Working women in the U.S.S.R. do have excellent daycare for their children. Often the brightest, cleanest spot in a factory or collective farm is the daycare center, filled with colorful toys. There children get the best food, vitamins, and medical supervision available. Such care is inexpensive, averaging around $18 per month per child.

A serious problem threatening Soviet family life is alcoholism. In the Soviet Union, the consumption of vodka per person aged 15 years or older is 14 liters per year — by far the highest in the world for distilled liquor. Elsewhere in the world, the next highest rate is only 5.4 liters per year. Alcoholism is a problem on the roads and in increasing crime rates. But it is felt most at home, where it contributes to family violence and divorce rates.

Soviet family life bears the stresses of a society growing too quickly. Soviet leaders are working to alleviate strains. New mothers are being given more liberal maternity leave (a full year), and anti-alcoholism propaganda is everywhere. In spite of continuing problems, most people agree that Soviet family life today is better than ever before.

Activity

▶ Many of the strains Soviet families face also exist in American life. How are the strains handled differently by the two cultures? Work together with classmates to do library research. Find out about American family life by answering these questions. Then compare American and Soviet statistics. How are they different and why?

1. What percentage of American women work full time?

   _____

2. How many hours do American men and women each work per week?

   _____

3. How many children does the average American family have?

   _____

4. How much distilled liquor is consumed per American per year?

   _____

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

LESSON 17

Drawing Conclusions

By now you've learned a great deal about Soviet society and have had many opportunities to compare it to American society. The questions below have been designed to elicit your final, thoughtful conclusions.

1. What have you learned about the Soviet system? Why is it considered an undemocratic system?

2. What have you learned about the American system? Why is it considered a democratic system?

3. What was the most important idea or fact you learned in this program? Why was it so important?

EVALUATION FORM

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE, ★ GOVERNMENT UPON THE PEOPLE

Was this program useful to you and your class? The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith would like to know how you feel about the teaching materials in this packet. Would you take a moment to answer the questions and return this form to us? Thank you.

1. With what grade(s) and class(es) did you use this program?

_____

2. With how many students did you use this program? _____

3. Was the teacher's guide

_____very helpful in presenting program?

_____fairly helpful in presenting program?

_____not helpful in presenting program?

Comments: _____

_____

4. Were the activity masters

_____very easy to use and understand?

_____fairly easy to use and understand?

_____difficult to use and understand?

Comments: _____

_____

5. How would you rate the treatment of the subject matter in this program?

____thorough ____ adequate ____ too brief

6. As a result of using this program, how many of your students do you believe have a greater understanding of how the American system compares with the Soviet system?

____more than half ____ about half ____ fewer than half

Comments: _____

_____

7. Do you have suggestions for improving this program?

Comments: _____

_____

Teacher's Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

ADL Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

(Fold)

Place
Stamp
Here

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
Education Department
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017